

## **Stainless Steel Cleaning Tips - Page 1**

### ***Surface Scratching***

Although stainless steel is a relatively hard material, it is possible to introduce surface scuffs and scratches when harder objects are drawn across the metal surface. Examples of harder materials are knife blades, cast iron saucepans, ceramic pots and mugs (particularly the unglazed area on the base) and certain abrasives/scouring materials. Scratching will be most noticeable on the drainer area of the sink where hard objects are likely to be placed during normal household use. These marks are usually only superficial and can be removed with a proprietary stainless steel cleaner/polish. A useful alternative is a car paint restorer, such as T-Cut.

### ***Corrosion***

The two most common types of corrosion that may be encountered, particularly on stainless steel sinks, are rust marks and pitting of the surface.

#### **1: Rust Marks**

When this type of staining occurs, it is unlikely that the marks are caused by the rusting of the stainless steel itself (The material used is a high quality 18/10 chrome nickel steel which is metallurgical incapable of rusting or corroding in normal household conditions, similar marks can be found with both porcelain and composite sinks). The rust marks are more likely to be the result of small particles of "ordinary steel" which have become attached to the surface, these have subsequently rusted in the damp environment of the sink. The most common source of such particles is from "wire wool" scouring pads, or wire wool used by the plumber during the installation of the sink. Contamination may also occur from carbon steel utensils and old cast iron water supply pipes.

These brown marks are only superficial stains, which will not harm the sink; they should be removed using a soft damp cloth and a multi purpose cream cleanser (such as Jif). Occasionally, it may be necessary to resort, to a proprietary stainless steel cleanser, to return the surface of the sink to its original condition. To avoid reoccurrence of any "rust-staining" it is essential that the source of the contamination is eliminated. In cases where contact cannot be avoided, it is even more important that the sink is given a thorough cleaning treatment after use.

#### **2: Pitting**

Another form of corrosion, which occasionally occurs in stainless steel sink bowls, is pitting of the surface: in extreme cases this may lead to perforation of the metal. The reason for this corrosive attack can usually be attributed to certain household products, for example:-

#### ***Bleaches***

Most common domestic bleaches/sterilizing solutions contain chlorine in the form of sodium hypochlorite. They should always be used to the strengths prescribed by the manufacturer and should be thoroughly rinsed off with clean water immediately after use. Any cleaning agents containing hypochlorites are unsuitable for long term contact with stainless steel and even when used in the highly diluted form, they can give pitting under certain conditions. For this reason it is not advisable to use a stainless steel sink for soaking fabrics in these solutions, especially over long periods of time (e.g. overnight).

#### ***Silver Dip Cleaners***

These are particularly harmful as they contain strong acids which can very quickly cause discoloration and pitting. If this type of cleaner comes into contact with the surface of the sink, it should be thoroughly rinsed off with clean water.

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### **Foodstuffs**

In general, stainless steel is fully resistant to all foodstuffs in common use. Only in isolated cases, such as when concentrated salt and vinegar mixtures are allowed to remain in contact with the steel for a long period, can any surface marking result. It is always good practice to wash down the stainless steel surface after food preparation.

### **Acids**

Strong acids such as sulphuric and hydrochloric are very corrosive and should not be allowed to come into contact with stainless steel catering equipment. If equipment is used for purposes other than foodstuffs e.g. photographic processing, it is essential that all traces of the solutions should be washed off immediately.

Stainless Steel is widely used for catering and domestic kitchen equipment because of its ability to resist corrosion and its ease of cleaning. In fact, stainless steel ranks alongside glass and new china in terms of "ease of cleaning" and in removal of bacteria from the surface. As a result of these virtues, the metal is often taken for granted and it is assumed that no problems will arise during its usage. However, some care is required to ensure that the. Stainless steel can live up to its reputation.

### **Day to Day Care**

To maintain the original appearance of the sink, a regular cleaning routine should be carried out using the following guidelines:-

- 1:** After use, wipe the item with a soft, damp, soapy cloth and rinse with clean water, preferably - warm/hot water. This should remove most substances encountered within the kitchen environment.
- 2:** For more tenacious deposits, including oil, grease and waterborne deposits, use a multipurpose cleanser (such as Cif) and apply with a soft damp cloth. This should be followed by rinsing with fresh water, as above.
- 3:** For really stubborn dirt or burnt on grease, a nylon scouring pad may be used in conjunction with the cream cleanser. On no account should "wire wool" pads be used unless they are made of stainless steel.
- 4:** Harsh abrasives and scouring materials should not be used for cleaning stainless steel as they will leave scratch marks in the surface and damage the appearance of the sink. Likewise, do not use wire brushes, scrapers or contaminated scouring pads.
- 5:** If the sink has a directional polished grain, any cleaning with abrasives should be carried out along this grain and not across it.
- 6:** After use, always remove wet cleaning-aids (such as cloths, pads, containers) from the surface, to avoid formation of water marks/stains.
- 7:** If required, dry the sink after use with a soft dry cloth or towel.

If the preceding guidelines are adhered to, the stainless steel sink should offer excellent life and should live up to its reputation of being "Stainless".....

### **Disclaimer**

All advice given in the previous paragraphs is on a totally independent basis and not necessarily the recommendations of the manufacturers of your sink or tap.

We can not be held responsible for any problems that may arise resulting from advice taken from this Website.